**Oral Story Retellings Assessment Protocol**

**Purpose**

One of the most effective processes for finding out whether a child understands narrative or story text structure is to use oral story retellings (Brown & Cambourne, 1987; Sadler, 2011; Stahl, 2009). Asking children to retell a story involves reconstructing the complete story structure including the story sequence, recalling important elements of the plot, making inferences, and noticing relevant details. Thus, oral story retellings assess story comprehension and narrative or story structure knowledge in a holistic, sequenced and organized way.

**Retelling as an Assessment Tool**

When assessing a reader's comprehension, often the question-and-answer format does not fully cover the extent of the learner's understanding. But in retelling, learners attempt to recall as much of the content as possible. Since they are not limited to responding only to a set of questions, a more thorough assessment of their passage knowledge may be gained through retelling (Searfoss et al., 1994). As an assessment strategy, retelling demonstrates what the student understands and remembers about the story; reveals what the student considers important about the story; indicates what the student knows about story structure and literary language, i.e. their organizing and summarizing of the stories; and demonstrates the students' vocabulary and oral language development (Rog, 2003; Morrow, 1996). Through the analysis of retelling (written/oral), the teacher can diagnose a child's ability to recall literally such as remembering facts, details, cause and effect relationships, and sequencing of events. Additionally, retellings can reveal children's sense of story structure and their ability to make inferences as they organize, integrate, and classify information that is implied but not expressed in the story. These characteristics suggest that retelling works as a useful reading comprehension assessment tool to be used as a diagnostic, during-reading, or post-reading.

**Administration Procedures**

Step 1: Graded Sentences for Initial Passage Selection

1. Begin by telling the student that you would like to hear him or her read some sentences.
2. Hand to the student a copy of the **Graded Sentences for Initial Passage Selection.**
3. Say to the student: *Please read these sentences to me at just the right speed, not too fast and not too slow. Pretend like you are talking to me.*
4. Continue having the student read a set of Graded Sentences until he or she misses two or more words, then stop.
5. The highest level of Graded Sentences with zero errors should be the level of the passage chosen for the oral retelling.

\*If the students do not perform well on the Level 1 sentences you should administer the Emergent Level Assessment Protocol.

Step 2: Student reads silently the passage selected.

Step 3: Instruct the student to conduct an oral story retelling. The student is not to refer back to the passage during the retelling.

\*\*\*For steps 2 and 3, refer to the appropriate level assessment protocol.